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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the
L O R D - M A Y O R,
T H E
A L D E R M E N,
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G O V E R N O R S of the several H O S P I T A L S
of the C I T Y of L O N D O N;
A T T H E
P A R I S H - C H U R C H of St. Bridget,

On M O N D A Y in Easter-Week, March 26. 1733.

Being one of the Anniversary Spittal-Sermons.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
^{Chaplain}
N I C O L A S, Lord Bishop of St. David's.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN PEMBERTON, at the Golden Buck,
against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet. 1733.

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

L O R D M A Y O R
BARBER, Mayor.

Tuesday the Third Day of April, One Thou-
sand, Seven Hundred, and Thirty-three,
and in the Sixth Year of the Reign of
King GEORGE the Second, of Great-
Britain, and so forth.

IT is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be
given to the Right Reverend Father in God, the
the Lord Bishop of St. David's, for his Sermon preach-
ed before this Court and the Governors of the several
Hospitals of this CITY, at the Parish-Church of St.
Bridget, on Monday in Easter-Week last; and that his
Lordship be desired to print the same.

On Monday in Easter-Week, 1733.

JACKSON.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of St. David's.



L O R D M A Y O R

Printed for John Parnell, at the Golden Ball,

against St. Bridget's Church in Iwyllyn. 1733.



I COR. X. 24.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.



BY another's wealth in this place is to be understood the good, or interest, or advantage of another; and the true sense of the Words is, Let no one be so intent upon taking care of himself and his own affairs, as, at the same time, not to let the affairs of others also have a share of his concern.

This is an excellent precept of our religion, and it is indeed an honour to that book, which we Christians profess to make the rule of our life and behaviour, that this and the like directions are so frequently to be found therein; and it would still be a greater recommendation of our faith to the world, if it were much more generally observed and practised than it is. It was an observation of * a great genius of our own country, That *there never was, in the world, any philosophy, or sect, or religion, or law, or institution, that carried up and exalted the good and*

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welfare

* Lord Bacon.

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welfare of others so high, and depressed the good and welfare of a man's single self so low, as the religion of Christ has done. That no one might think himself excused from attending to this rule of the apostle in the text, the direction is general, and extends to all persons whatsoever. The riches of the wealthy, the wisdom of the knowing, the greatness of persons in power and authority, are so far from being privileges excusing men from having a due regard to the good of others, that the several advantageous circumstances I have mentioned are so many arguments to bind the persons so distinguished yet more strongly to this duty, and to exert themselves with so much the greater zeal and vigour in the performance thereof. How comes it then to pass, that a duty, to which men are so universally obliged, should be so much omitted, as it is? For if we look abroad into the world, it is to be feared, that we shall find too much of that narrowness and contractedness of spirit, which the text cautions us against; and too little of that care and concern for others, which is here enjoined. Health, and ease, and pleasure, and plenty of the comforts and conveniencies of life, are such things, as men are apt enough to desire, and look after, and provide, for themselves; and when this end is once compassed, they are many times apt to look on the work as done, for which they came into the world, and to consider their main point as gained, and that there remains nothing now, but to sit down and enjoy their own good condition, and reap all that satisfaction and joy, that men commonly find, when arrived to prosperous circumstances. As for other men, the rest of mankind, they are contented to leave them to take the courses, which they may think best for their welfare, and to shift, as well as they can, for themselves. It will diminish none of their happiness, though they should see things to go ill with others, nor will it make them more happy, to observe them to go well.

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well. And if a man, thus wrapt up in himself, is but successful enough to make one happy, he has made all so, that he is concerned for. If his own family, and his near relations, and dependants, are taken into his plan, they are to be looked on as a part of himself, and it is still himself, in a manner, he is taking care of, when he is doing any thing for them; this is still confining all good offices to objects at home, and not extending them, as he ought to do, to all around him, to those who are afar off as well as to those who are near. But how is a temper of this kind consistent with the excellent doctrine of the text? Most plainly not at all; it is as opposite to it, and inconsistent with it, as is possible. And therefore there must be some mistake, some false reasoning, that men suffer themselves to run into about this matter, in order to keep their minds quiet and easy, under so plain a violation of a precept of Christianity. And the mistake is, too generally, this, they think that all is well with them, and that no one has a right to complain of them, if they do but take care to hurt no body, and do not, on any occasion, allow themselves to defraud, or injure, or oppress their neighbour. If any one happens to be a sufferer by their means, they will indeed look on themselves as bound to make him reparation for the wrong, and to endeavour to heal the wound of their own making. Farther than this they do not seem sensible of any demands, which their neighbour may have upon them. And the truth of the matter is, that, in cases, where no breach can be pleaded of any human law, their neighbour has no such claim upon them, as he can prosecute in any of the courts of justice of this world, he is not entitled to any relief from the civil magistrate, and that, because the cognizance of the crime of uncharitableness is what appertains to another and an higher jurisdiction, and is one of those reserved

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reserved cases, that God, the supreme judge of mankind, must be supposed to keep in his own hands.

We read in the parable (*Luke x. 31, 32. &c.*) that the priest and the Levite in their journey came, and looked on the man, that had *fallen among thieves*, and was *left* by them *half dead* in the road, and that *they passed by on the other side*. Not a step did they take towards comforting or relieving him, and they thought perhaps, they were not much to blame for *passing by* a poor creature in distress, and giving themselves no trouble about him, so long as they were not themselves the thieves, that had *stript* and *wounded* him. But this was not a way of thinking, nor a conduct, which Christ could approve or allow of in any who professed to be his followers. We Christians have *not so learned Christ*. We are taught otherwise and must have widely different notions of these things, if we receive *the truth, as it is in Jesus*. To condemn a carriage of this kind, and to shew us the great blameableness thereof, was plainly the intent of our Saviour in this parable; and, as crooked things do most appear so, when viewed at the same time, and compared with things, that are strait, after giving us the above-mentioned instances of want of humanity, he tells us, what their duty was, and what they and all others, in the like circumstances, ought to have done, in the example of the good *Samaritan*. That he was to *love his neighbour* was a maxim in religion, that the *Samaritan* had undoubtedly learnt, and this was likewise a maxim, that the priest and the Levite, one would think, must have heard of, as well as he; but they did not, or would not, understand it, as he did, as importing, that every one in distress, whom they could help, was *their neighbour*, and that helping him, in such cases, was no other than that *love* that they were bound to show him. Therefore our Saviour proposes to the lawyer, whom he was discoursing with, the pattern of the

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compassionate Samaritan to copy after, and, what he says to him, on that occasion, he says to all of us, *Go and do thou likewise.* And the exhortation of the holy apostle, in the text, is the same with the doctrine of his great master, in that parable, *Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth.*

And more is intended in this exhortation, than that we should only do a good work now and then, and, as it were, by chance. If we never give our alms, but when a sight of some wretched object of charity presents itself to us, and almost forces them from us, if we never give, but upon great importunity and sollicitation, or when we should be ashamed and out of countenance not to do as others do, or only upon occasion of our receiving the holy sacrament; this is no argument of a real love and charity for our poor brethren, nor of our having that constant and habitual concern for their good, that the text seems to require. *Seeking the wealth, or good, of others,* is an expression, that imports more than this can amount to; It is having their good sincerely and affectionately at heart, charging ourselves with it, in a manner, as if it were part of our ordinary business and employment, and looking on it, as one of those affairs, for which we were sent into the world. And that no one may imagine, that this is requiring too much at our hands, or setting up the duty too high, it should be considered, that this matter, well weighed, will be found to be no more, than what was required and enjoined in one of the great commandments of the law, to wit, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thy self.*

And I cannot, I think, more seasonably recommend to you this truly Christian spirit, than on the present occasion, when we are met together on the account of so many noble and useful charities; which have not only owed their birth to this spirit at the first, but have all along
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had their constant supplies of nourishment from it, and have been greatly strengthened and supported by it from time to time, and which, as this excellent spirit prevails more or less amongst us, will for ever, in proportion, either flourish, or decay. I shall hope therefore, it will be no improper use of the present opportunity, if I set myself to lay before you some of those motives, which ought, I apprehend, to have the greatest weight with us, in order to preserve and cherish in us that generous concern for the good of others, which the apostle recommends in the text.

Now the most contrary thing in the world to this excellent Christian principle is, the sordid vice of selfishness; that poisonous weed, which is of so very malignant a nature, that in whatever minds it once gets root, it will suffer no good quality to flourish or live near it. This is one of those foul degeneracies prophesied of in the new testament, and which are to come to pass in the latter days of the church: for amongst several apostates expressly foretold to come in the latter times (*2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4.*) one sort of them, as we find there, and those set in the front, and mentioned even before any of the rest, are persons, who shall be selfish; the holy spirit particularly foretelling in that place, that *men shall be lovers of their own selves.*

This then being a temper of mind, against which the Christians of all ages ought more especially to be upon their guard, and of which one may say, as *St. Paul* did of *Elymas, the sorcerer*, that it is *the enemy of all righteousness*; before I proceed, it will be convenient that I premise something concerning the nature of this vice of selfishness, that so we may be fully apprised of it, and know of a certain what it is.

Most certain it is, and it must be granted, that all self-love has not the nature of sin. To love ourselves in a certain

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certain measure and degree is highly reasonable, and natural, and even necessary to the preservation of ourselves. And the principle, which puts us upon this, is so far from being contrary to nature, that, as some of the ancient philosophers have well observed, they are the *prima natura*, the very first directions and admonitions of nature, which cause us to have a love for ourselves. As long as we carry these bodies about us, a proper care is to be taken of them. As long as we are stationed as inhabitants of this world, it is but right, that we make some sort of provision, that we may not live here uneasy for want of proper accommodations. There is a justice we owe to our health, to our estates, to our good names, to our families, and, to be sure, to our souls. And if we were not to love our own selves, how could self-love be a rule for our loving others, according to the great commandment before-mentioned, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self*? But though self-love, rightly considered, be what nature in its purest state cannot but be supposed to approve and to recommend to us, yet to love our selves, so as not to care for or love others, this is not dictated by pure and uncorrupt nature, but by nature wretchedly vitiated and depraved. But then if there be a self-love, which is no other than a natural thing, which has its foundation in reason, and which a wise and good man cannot be supposed to be without, how comes it to pass, that the scripture sometimes speaks of self-love in the general, as if there were in it the nature of sin? Why does the apostle, in the place forementioned, rank *lovers of their own selves* with sinners, as if that were the character of bad men? And why again does the apostle, here in the words of my text, exhort us in this manner, *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth*, as if we ought to have no regard to, or care for, ourselves at all? I answer, That the scripture doth this, to caution us, in the

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strongest manner, against that inordinate self-love, which wholly excludes others from having their due share in our love, and which confines all love to ourselves. It is supposed all the while, that under proper restrictions and limitations, the natural self-love, which is originally, and that for wise and good reasons, implanted in us, will hold, and continue, and exert itself, on all proper occasions, for our good, as it needs must; and it is impossible, nay, I will add, unfitting, it should ever be removed. What therefore religion must be apprehended to direct in this case is, not that we should endeavour to remove or extirpate out of our minds all love of our selves. (for that would be neither fitting, nor possible) but that, like other passions, we should regulate and govern it, and hinder it from running into those excesses, to which nature, corrupted as it is and depraved, is but too apt to carry it. It is usual in Scripture to speak of things, which are to be done only in a certain measure and degree, as if they were not to be done at all. Thus says our Saviour, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, Labour not for the meat that perisheth*, as if we were not to take any pains at all, in order to a comfortable livelihood, nor to think at all of getting, or increasing, an estate. The meaning is, We are not to do these things, we are to neglect all earthly provisions, to have them little, or not at all, at heart, in comparison of that much greater care we ought to have for our souls, and their everlasting welfare. So as to the point before us, the apostle exhorts thus, *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth*, as if we were to do nothing for ourselves. His meaning is, Our care for ourselves ought by no means to be such, and in that excessive degree, as to admit of no affection to, or care for, others. For it is not unworthy of our notice, that the apostle's character of uncharitable men, that they are *lovers of their own selves*, and his precept in the text,

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Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth, are explained by an exhortation of his, in the epistle to the *Philippians* (ch. ii. 4.) *Look not every man on his own things; but every man KAI' ~~to~~ ^{en} ~~en~~ ^{en} ~~en~~ ^{en} ALSO on the things of others;* That is to say, That is the faulty love of ourselves, which excludes all love and regard to others. There is then a self-love, that is natural and just, and there is a self-love, that is sinful; and it is a very easy matter to distinguish them in ourselves. For do we make the happiness of others an interest of our own, and do we find ourselves, in a manner, hurt, or wounded, by their misfortunes? Have we a brotherly feeling of the good or ill of others, as if the case were our own, and not theirs? Do we find a sensible pleasure arising in ourselves, upon the prosperity of our neighbour, and do we sympathize with him, whenever, by any of the numerous accidents of life, we find him afflicted and a sufferer? Are we disposed not only *to rejoice with them, who rejoice,* but also *to mourn with them that mourn?* A man may soon find, how it is with him, as to this particular. A little observation of himself will help him to make a thorough discovery to himself, which class of men he is really and truly of, whether of the selfish, or of those, who are not so. For if his charity, which may be allowed to begin at home, goes no farther, but ends there too, if he sees no such quality in himself, as a love, or benevolence, shedding itself abroad, if he knows in his own heart, that he never gives any alms at all in private, and that, whenever he is called upon, or invited, to give his help to publick charities, he is ever more ready to make objections to the end and design of such charities, or to find fault with the conduct and management of them, than to be contributing and assisting thereto, if he perceives, in general, that the state and condition of others does not move or affect him at all, and he is neither made easy, or uneasy, by any change hap-

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pening therein, if he counts he is neither the better nor the worse for any think that befalls others, if it be indifferent to him, whether they be in health, or in sickness, at ease, or in pain, cloathed, or naked, in prosperity, or adversity, and, in all events, that affect them, he be the same untouched and unconcerned person, if, when others are overtaken with misfortunes, instead of running to their help, he can content himself with the way of thinking of that selfish one in *Euripides*, Οὐδὲν μίλει μοι ταῦτα ἃ καλῶς ἔχει. "That is no concern of mine: I am full as happy, as I need be;" it is very plain, that this man is not one, who conforms to the apostolical rule in the text, but he may assuredly conclude himself to be one of that degenerate part of mankind, whom the apostle describes to be, *lovers of their own selves*.

To be more particular, there are *three* vices, which, wherever they are, either find a man selfish, or else make him so; and they are pride, and covetousness, and a slothful disposition.

1. If a man be proud, 'tis not to be wondered at, that he should likewise be selfish. We do not usually trouble ourselves with things, which we despise. It is the apostle's advice (*Heb. x. 24.*) κατανῶμεν ἀλλήλους, *Let us consider one another, Let us attend to one anothers cases*; but that is a thing, which a proud man is not very likely to do. A man may set that extraordinary value upon himself, as to look upon the rest of mankind, in comparison, not to be worth his thinking of. Instead of being convinced, that he was born to be serviceable to others, and to do them good, he may perhaps, from conceiving too highly of himself, be induced to think, that all others were born to pay him honour, that from himself nothing is due to others, not so much as good will, or charity, or any one good office, but that from others he is entitled to

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every instance of regard they can show him, and to every service they can do him. And this has been the case of that great enterprizer, *Alexander of Macedon*, and of some others, who, copying after his model, have affected to be thought the great and mighty conquerors of their times, and who to their own ambition and wrong thirst of glory have not scrupled to sacrifice even thousands of those very lives, which, by their particular stations and relations, they were bound to cherish and protect.

2. So likewise if a man be of a covetous temper, the great bias of that mans mind must not be, to be charitable, or to serve others, but to enrich himself, and nothing is plainer, than that he, who is a lover of money, must also in the apostle's sense, in that sense, in which self-love is justly to be blamed, be likewise *a lover of himself*. In the account of him, who is covetous, whatever he has, though in never so great abundance, is too little for him, and every little almost is too much for his neighbour; he is altogether for himself; as to charity, that he looks upon as a thing, that must, of course, diminish the heap, he wants perpetually to be increased, and for that he finds no disposition; and he cares not who *wants*, provided that he himself may *abound*.

3. But besides, there is a certain blame-worthy indolence, and unactiveness of temper, which often accompanies a selfish spirit, and is an argument thereof. There are divers good turns, which others need at our hands, which we cannot do for them without allowing them some part of our time and leisure, and affording them some share of our pains and trouble, and this is what the man who is selfish will not easily consent to. If he is but just to himself and his own concerns, he acquiesces in that, and stops there. About other mens affairs he is
habitually

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habitually careless. He can exercise himself in consulting and acting for his own good, and can busy himself in that, but must be excused from going any farther, and so all his thoughts and care are confined to himself, and center there, and the rest of mankind are to be left to make out their way, and to do, as well as they can, for themselves.

And now having said thus much concerning selfishness, or that vicious self-love, that makes men to be the reverse of what it was the intent of the precept in the text, and indeed of the whole tenor of the gospel, to make them, I proceed as I intended, to lay down some motives, to induce us to have a charitable concern for others, and to make us active and zealous in promoting their welfare and happiness.

First then, Let us consider, that the doctrine of the text is no other than the doctrine of nature and of that reason, that all of us carry about us. That we are not born only for ourselves, is the natural dictate of every reasonable mind. I have observed in this discourse, that the sinful self-love proceeds not from nature in its original, but degenerate state. For why? The same nature, which necessitates us to love ourselves, prompts us to mind also the good of others, as what is our bounden duty. And this the very frame and constitution of our nature supposes, because man is plainly made for society. By the nature God has given us we are capable of conversing with, and assisting, and succouring, and comforting one another, and of contributing to the happiness of each other. If we consider the great body of mankind, we may look upon it, as a society at large, whereof all individuals are members in particular, and they are to act as members thereof within the particular societies, to which they belong, and in their sphere, for the good of the whole;

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whole; they are to serve their country, and their fellow members, according to their power and capacity. As for that man, who is unconcerned for others, he quite forgets the common relation we stand in to one another, as sociable beings, and members of society; nay, he doth, in effect, renounce this honour and privilege of his nature, who, though living in the midst of the community, is of as little use to the rest of the world, as if he had sequestered himself to a desert or a cell, where no one can be the better for him. When God asked Cain, (*Gen. iv. 9.*) after the unnatural murder of his brother, *Where is Abel, thy brother?* he said, *I know not; am I my brother's keeper?* a rude and unmannerly answer this; but that is not all; it argued, that he was so depraved, and had so far put off humanity, that he was utterly insensible of the obligation of nature; for he was indeed his brother's keeper, in some sense and measure, and he was to watch over him, so far as he well could, for his preservation, safety, and welfare.

Let one, that has been, in his time, the most selfish man in the world, but fall himself into misery and misfortunes, and that will make even him see and feel, that men from their common humanity, are obliged to be concerned for and to help one another. He will not only wish for and desire relief, but he will think it hard too, if he has it not, and he will even make it matter of complaint, that others do not their bounden duty, if they do not afford it him. The great error in this point, that he was formerly led into by a vicious self-love, will then vanish, and he will then see things, as they are.

2. If we are obliged to have a real concern for the happiness of others, as we are men, much more, as I observe in the second place, are we obliged to this, as we are Christians. For we are tied and knit closer together by Christianity

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stianity than by common humanity. This the apostle shows (1 Cor. xii.) where he compares the church, the mystical body of Christ, for this reason, to the natural body, to signify the love, that we, who are members of that body, ought to bear to one another, and the tender regard we ought to have for each other's welfare. For *in the natural body there is no schism, but the members have the same care one of another, and if one of the members suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* So it should be in the mystical body, and its members. In them too there should be the like aptness to mutual help and the same harmony and sympathy. And the apostle's argument for our being true and just to one another (Ephes. iv. 25.) is likewise an argument for our being charitable and doing good, to wit, *That we are members one of another.* Accordingly this our Saviour made the mark or sign of his disciples, *By this shall all men know, says he, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* And indeed the Christians of the first ages were known and distinguished from other people by this. Their care of the poor man and the stranger was so notorious and remarkable, that their enemy Julian, who had had his education amongst them, and could not but know them well, does them the justice, in divers places of his writings, to acknowledge it. And Lucian, taking notice of this practice of theirs, observes, how easy a thing it was, in those days, for the crafty and cunning to make an advantage to themselves of this liberal and beneficent temper of the Christians. But so it was, by the accounts of their enemies, as well as their friends, that the first Christians were so closely linked together in the bond of charity, so really concerned for one another's state, so ready upon all occasions to minister to the necessities, to supply the wants, and to promote the welfare of one another, that greater mutual

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mutual kindness could not have been showed, if the whole body of believers, the entire *household of faith*, had been all of the same kindred, and had been but one family according to the flesh.

3. A *third* motive I shall urge to a charitable regard to the good of others is, the great example of our blessed Lord, who, *for us men, and for our salvation*, that he might deliver us out of a miserable state, *came down from heaven*, and condescended to be incarnate, and to be a *man of sorrows*, and at last crucified. A most illustrious instance of a charitable concern for others; greater than which cannot be conceived or imagined! What a surprizing degree of love was this? For our redemption the eternal son of God, no less a person, *extraordinary*, *emptied himself*, *he humbled himself*, to become man, to live a sorrowful life and to dye an accursed death. Supposing that we had never so great a concern for the good of others, what could we do for them like this? What comparison can it bear or admit of, that one man should be charitable to another, and that the son of God, for man's sake, should consent to become man? This is a degree of concern for others, that should make us ashamed to reflect, that our great master should do so much good for all of us, and that it is with so much difficulty, that we bring ourselves to do the least good thing for one another. Thou can't relieve thy brother's poverty, without impoverishing thyself. Thou can't help to enlarge him from a prison, without making thyself a prisoner in his stead. Thou can't give him food and raiment, and yet leave thyself as far from wanting either of them, as thou wast before. And, after all, what is that mighty expence, to which it is likely thy concern for him should put thee? It may cost thee a small pittance of thy wealth, it may demand of thee perhaps some portion of thy time, it may

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may require a little of thy care and thought and trouble. But what is all this, what is the utmost the most charitable man in the world can do for his brother, when compared with the astonishing instance of the love of our blessed Lord to mankind?

4. A *fourth* motive to a charitable regard to others, and ministring to them accordingly is, the great pleasure, that ever must attend such a practice. And thus it is true, that all the good we do our neighbour may be resolved into self-love, if we consider that pleasure redounding from it, that we may lawfully and honestly propound to ourselves, as a motive to our duty in this kind. Sometimes indeed self-love is a corrupt end of doing good offices to others; as for instance, when alms are given, purely that they may be seen of men, and when a man does any good thing, only to be taken notice of, and to receive the applause of men, in which case, though others may be the better for the benefit received from him, yet does the act lose all its value and gracefulness, by proceeding from so mean a principle, and because there was a pitiful self-love at the bottom of it; and as such an one does some good works openly, to wit, only to get the esteem and praise of the world, so for the same reason, he will be sure never to do any good work in secret. But self-love is a very lawful and honourable inducement to do good to others, when we propose to our selves the pleasure and satisfaction there is in doing it. As to almsgiving, says our Saviour, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive*; it is more blessed to show kindnesses, than to have them done us.

In the common course of human affairs it cannot be otherwise, but that there must be much misery in the world. Let us but take a short view of some of the ordinary occurrences of life, and of some of those cases,

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frequently happening, which have deservedly gained the attention to them of the piety and charity of this great city. In one place, a child, almost as soon as it is born, utterly unable to help itself, and wholly unprovided for, is deprived of that affectionate parent, who would naturally have done every thing possible for its happiness, and comes to be left in the hands of strangers, with nothing, but its cries and its innocence, to solicit and plead for it. In another place, the hands, that were wont to maintain many, and to diffuse plenty, and joyfulness, through a whole family, are disabled by sickness from doing so any more. Besides, numberless are the accidents, by which men daily lose the use of their limbs, become maimed and lame, and are utterly unable to do any thing for themselves or others, though never so well disposed to industry; and for disasters of this sort we need not go so far as to the camp, the experience of every day almost shows us, that we have numbers of them nearer home, and at our very doors. Nor are these brittle and frail bodies of ours the only part of us which is subject to accidents. Our very minds are not exempt. Some men are born into the world with that unhappy frame, that they never in all their lives arrive, as others do, to a competent use of their reason; and how often does it happen, that by a fright, or a fever, or some shocking calamity, or some violent passion oversetting men, or by some unhappy temperament of the blood and spirits, which men could neither foresee nor prevent, they are all of a sudden deprived of the right use of their understandings, and, till they are recovered from that state by medicines and a proper regimen, must be kept, under due restraint, from hurting others or themselves, and can be no longer looked on, or treated with, as part of the rational world? And these are the involuntarily miserable, whose misery cannot, with any truth, be said to be their own choice. But there are, be-

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sides these, the miserable of another species, and they are those, who are voluntarily so; I mean the idle and vicious part of the poor, those of them especially, who have health, and strength, and youth, on their side, the vagrants which infest our streets, and often intercept the alms, that were better bestowed in other places, those, in a word, who prefer laziness and beggary to the comforts of an honest calling; and the great misery of this sort of wretches is, that if some body does not interpose for them, who has a greater regard and a truer love for them, than they have for themselves, and endeavour, when nothing else will do, to bring them to themselves by punishment, and to reform them by discipline, the consequence of their being left to themselves will be, that, in order to maintain themselves in their vices, they will in a little time, in all likelihood, be hardy enough to venture to live, in a manner, in a state of war with all mankind, and will allow themselves in thefts, and robberies, and murders; crimes, which will render them detestable, both in the sight of God and of man. And these we are to reckon the miserable of their own making, and a very great degree of misery it is (though they are not as yet become as thoroughly bad as is possible, nor have as yet filled up the utmost measure of iniquity they are capable of) to be, as the idle, and vicious, and unemployed poor always are, in the high road to destruction both of soul and body; and for that reason it cannot but be every good man's wish, that instances of such unhappy creatures were not near so frequent amongst us, as they are.

It was the saying of a very charitable man, upon observing the state of mankind in general, and how much sin and misery there was amongst them, *How can a good man be happy, when all the world is thus miserable about him?* He has plainly but one way of being so, and that is by endeavouring, in his own sphere, to reduce and lessen the

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the quantity of misery, which he sees, and knows of, in the world, as much as is possible. For the studying and trying to do this, and in any degree, succeeding therein, is ever attended with a joy and pleasure, that is divine and ravishing, and of a kind much superior to any thing, which he, who is mean enough to be selfish, can ever relish or enjoy.

5. And this brings me to a *fifth* consideration, to stir us up to seek the good of others, as well as our own, which is, That the sense of having done this is what will be found to please us best at last. What, I beseech you, will it signify to me at the end of life, that I have lived only to myself, indulged all manner of ways to myself, cared for none but myself, enjoyed my ease, and taken my fill of pleasure? Is there any comfort in thinking of this at our *latter end*? None at all. This cannot yield any pleasurable reflection. Nay, a person, who has employed his time no better than this amounts to, is so much the more uneasy on the death-bed, by how much more he lived to himself, when now he can indulge himself no more, and all the ease and pleasure, he ever lived in, leaves not after it the least comfortable relish or remembrance. A selfish, and unprofitable, and uncharitable life can do no otherwise than deliver a man over to a foolish and uncomfortable end. Hast thou indeed done good in thy generation? Hast thou been duly mindful, on all occasions, *quem te Deus esse jussit, & humanâ quâ parte locatus es in re*, that is, *what all the several duties were, which thy situation in the world required of thee?* Canst thou say, and with truth, "I have not come into the world for nothing, "I have not lived in human society for nothing, but others "have been the better for me, the sick, the needy, the distressed, the ignorant, those of all sorts, to whom my "beneficence could be extended, within my sphere?" Has
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God had thy best services from thee, and hast thou been useful and beneficial to the world? There is comfort and joy in thinking of, and reflecting upon this, when all the ease, and pleasure, of self-indulgence, yea, all worldly pomp, and state, and honour, are past away, and gone, and are now utterly insignificant things to us. It is not, we may be assured, the good we have enjoyed ourselves, but the good we have done to others, that will satisfy, and please us, and stand us in stead when we come to die.

6. Let us consider in the *sixth* place, how very needful the virtue required in the text is to recommend us to God. For this is that beneficent temper the apostle speaks of in the thirteenth chapter of this very epistle from whence the words of the text are taken, without which all the excellencies, we can to pretend to, are of no account in the sight of God. The chapter begins thus, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and I have no charity, I am nothing.* And here it is observable, that one of the excellent properties and effects of this so necessary grace of charity mentioned by the apostle in that chapter, amongst the rest, is this (as we read v. 5.) That it is by no means selfish. *Charity seeketh not her own.* The same word is used in the original for *seeking* both there and in the text, and the passage is plainly parallel to the words I have been discoursing upon, and is very fitly expounded by them, *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*

7. I should now have done with the several motives which should induce us, and prevail with us, to have a proper

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proper regard to the good of others, but there is one motive yet behind, which I cannot well omit on this occasion, and I must not forget to remind you, in the *seventh* and *last* place, how much we are concerned, as protestants, not to be defective in this point of charity. We are convinced (and that upon very good grounds) that *the faith*, we of this church profess, is no other, than that, *which was once delivered to the saints*, and we cannot but be sensible, how necessary it is to a true *faith*, that it show itself in *working by love*. Could it appear that we were more wanting herein than others, or did in the least fall short of those from whose communion we have separated ourselves, it would give our adversaries of the church of *Rome* such a cause of triumph, as I persuade myself, they have not at this day. What has given an handle to some to misrepresent us, in this particular, has been this, that we do not, as they do, place merit in good works, nor make them, with the council of *Trent*, the efficient cause of our justification. And the truth is, we think it reason enough for doing them, that we are assured, that they are well pleasing to God, that God has plainly required them at our hands, and has promised to reward them. Those great and excellent charities, which call us together at this time, are a plain vindication of us, that we are very far from being *Solifidians*, or persons wholly unmindful of good works: and may the argument, by a continual increase and flourishing of charity amongst us, grow every day still stronger in our favour. We have before us the excellent patterns of our protestant ancestors, to excite us to be charitable and helpful to others, as they were. One of the first of the glorious fruits of the happy reformation was, the erecting and endowing, by the crown, and by private persons, some of those truly useful foundations, which have ever since afforded so much help and comfort to the needy and distressed, and which continue a lasting

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credit and honour to this great and opulent city. The zeal of the first friends of the reformation distinguished itself so early in this work, that the noble and beneficent temper of our countrymen seems only to have waited for the removal of popery, and the clearing of some convents of an useless set of friars, that had dwelt in them, to be able to shine forth in its full lustre and glory, and to show itself in far more substantial instances of charity, than any they had ever gone into before. It is no sign of a selfish religion, nor of a religion, which does not very strongly put us upon caring for others, that it has now, for no less time, than near *two hundred* years last past, been daily and continually showing its spirit and genius, in some of the most laudable kinds of charity, that the heart of man could contrive, or think of, for the relief of the unhappy.

And now that justice may be done to those worthy persons, to whose skill, and faithfulness, and generous concern for the good of the miserable of their fellow-citizens, and others, the prosperous estate of such designs as these, must ever, in a great measure, be owing, it is fit you should be acquainted with the present state and condition of the hospitals of this city.

Here the Report was read.

And here let me prevail with you to cast a look back upon *two* of our famous hospitals, those of St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas, and to reflect a little upon the great good that has been done there within the compass of the single year last past. It must doubtless occasion a very sensible pleasure in every compassionate breast to hear, how much benefit the miserable of our own species have received from those places in that time, and how many, who

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who were so very lately objects of pity, have returned from thence, in so short a space, happily altered, with healthful bodies, and minds full of joy, and, we will hope too, with thanks to God in their mouths, to their own dwellings. By the account of the last year (and, in this, former years have not been behind them, but rather exceeded them) in these *two* hospitals only, taken together, so great a number, as between *eight and nine thousand* wounded, maimed, sick, and diseased persons, have met with the relief they wanted, and are returned home to their several businesses and occupations, and above *a thousand* more, we are told, are at this time under the same inspection and care, and, with the blessing of God, are now in the way of, and hoping for, the like happy success. Let us now put the supposition, that no such provision had been made amongst us for the case of so great a number of unhappy persons, as, by the piety of good Christians, has been made in these hospitals, and let us but consider with ourselves, what must unavoidably have been the consequence. Sickness and accidents would still have happened, as they do, and the numbers of the unfortunate in our neighbourhood, in that case, had not been less than they are, but in all likelihood much greater; and what must then have become of them? Why, many of those unhappy persons, we must imagine, had either been left to perish within their own habitations, which had then, in a manner, become their hospitals, but hospitals of a very wretched sort, without advice, without medicine, without relief; or else perhaps they would have ventured themselves into our streets, and sought that pity there, which they could meet with no where else. Would it not have given us pain to meet with objects of misery on every side? Would it not have abated much of that pleasure we now justly take in beholding the beauty, and riches, and magnificence of this flourishing city, if but

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a small part of the great number I have mentioned had been exposed and scattered up and down in every corner, and permitted to lye languishing, and even expiring in our view? How much more is it for the honour of our religion and country, that as few sights of human nature in misery should appear amongst us, as is possible? That there are yet left too many such, is too evident to be denied, and, I apprehend, it must be so still, till the beneficent spirit I have been recommending, exerts itself yet with greater vigor amongst us, and puts us upon doing somewhat yet farther for their good. May God therefore put it into our hearts zealously to set about the business of increasing the present streams of these, and likewise of the other charities of this city, that more persons, in their time of need, may become partakers thereof, and be refreshed thereby.

And, after the several motives I have already urged at large, I need not, I think use many words, to induce us thereto. All that I shall think proper to add, by way of conclusion, shall be, only briefly to hint to you these few things.

I observed to you in this discourse, that there are certain qualities, which are apt to make men selfish, and to hinder them from being so zealous, as they should be, in doing good to others. Against these qualities let us resolve to be more especially on our guard; and that we may be so more effectually,

Let us take care, in the *first* place, not to be hindred from doing good by any thing like pride, or too high a conceit of ourselves and contempt of others; let us be sure, that (as our blessed Saviour himself was, and as he expressly calls upon us to be) we be all of us *meek and lowly in heart*, and (to use the expression of *St. Peter*) that we be *clothed with humility*. Let us remember, that the present life is a state of trial, and not of reward, and that

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that it is not the rank of life we are in, but our conduct and deportment therein, that must recommend us to God, and render us of any worth or value in his sight, and that it can be by no means concluded, because one man is less prosperous, and in lower circumstances, than another may be, that therefore he is less in God's esteem; and this is a good reason, why no man should think too highly of himself, or too meanly of his brother. Let us think less, than commonly we do, of the distance, which worldly circumstances have put between us and our brethren, and more of the great distance there is between God and ourselves; and this contemplation will ever keep us in such an habit of humility, as will render us at all times apt and ready to do those good offices for our brethren, which they may stand in need of at our hands. We shall then not fail to admire the infinite condescension of God, that he, *who dwelleth on high, and whose throne is in heaven,* highly exalted above all angels and archangels, *above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,* should so far humble himself, *as to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth,* and, in particular, that he should show so much kindness to such sinful creatures as ourselves. It will then be but natural for us to imitate the goodness we admire. How can we think any man's case whatsoever below our notice, when we consider, that we ourselves, with all our sins, and frailties, and infirmities about us, are not below the notice of the Almighty, nor without considerable marks and tokens of his bounty to us?

Again, That we may not be hindered from doing good by too great a love of riches, let us not think that portion of our wealth to be thrown away or misemployed, which may procure for us the prayers of the poor and destitute in our behalf, and entitle us to the blessing of God upon the rest of our substance. Let us persuade ourselves, that

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the very best use we can make of riches, the *uncertain mammon* of this world, is, to make them a means of procuring for us those *everlasting habitations* spoken of by our Saviour, and that we can make no purchase with them, like the favour of God here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

Nor, *lastly*, let us be hindred from doing good to others, by imagining, that, without this, we have business enough to do of our own, and sufficient to take up all our time and thoughts. For (as, I hope, I have convinced you in this discourse) this is more an affair of our own, and more appertaining to us, than men are commonly apt to apprehend it; and we cannot be better employed, or more profitably for ourselves, than when we do that good to others, which we have opportunity of doing, in obedience to the commands of God, and in expectation of his rewards.

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